The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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FOR VICTORY BUY UNITED STATES WAR BONDS AND STAMPS
Thru Payroll Savings

WHOLE NO. 1799 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1945 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 35, NO. 40

LABOR, USA

Washington, D. C.—The thirteenth edition of the American Federationist of the Air, broadcast on the "Labor, USA" program over the American Broadcasting Company network, presented the following outstanding feature articles to supplement the news:

How About Strikes?

By ROBERT J. WATT

Member of the National War Labor Board

America faces a troubled industrial situation. Strikes are on the increase. Threats of new stoppages are popping up all over the map. What can be done about them?

First, let us remember that strikes are not an economic disease, but merely the manifest symptoms of a disease. There is no cure-all for strikes. They can't be stopped by passing a law. That was tried by Congress when it adopted the War Labor Disputes Act. The effect of this law has been to make the situation worse. Congress enacted legislation to correct what was troubling us without taking the time to find out what was causing the trouble.

A doctor doesn't attempt to cure a patient's illness by treating the symptoms. He attacks the basic causes. That's what we must do with strikes.

All strikes have the same basic causes—injustice, misunderstanding and lack of labor-management cooperation.

While the immediate causes of current strikes vary with each particular case, the main trouble is that peace has brought serious pay cuts to most American workers. With wage rates frozen during the war, workers had to depend upon overtime to meet higher living costs. Now that the overtime is gone, pay envelopes have shrunk considerably. In the case of a mechanic receiving one dollar an hour, his take-home pay has dropped from $52 a week to $40 a week due to the loss of eight hours overtime at time-and-a-half. Out of that $40, about $8 is deducted for taxes, leaving him $32. This worker may have been able to get along on $32 a week before the war, but it takes $45 at present-day prices to buy the things he could get for $32 then. That means he has to reduce his standard of living and deprive himself and his wife and children of the things they want and need. At this stage trouble begins.

It is essential to the best interests of the nation that wage rates be lifted immediately to make up for peacetime losses. It is likewise imperative that better government machinery be devised to deal with industrial disputes. We look to the labor-management conference set for Nov. 5 to recommend such machinery.

Meanwhile, the American Federation of Labor appeals to all the nation's workers to conduct themselves with patience and restraint during the coming weeks and months until new policies are developed. Extreme action may prejudice labor's cause and it will certainly delay the reconversion program which workers must depend on for lasting peacetime jobs.

Help Wanted

By HARVEY W. BROWN

Vice-President of the A. F. of L.

When does a war end?

When does it end for the blinded sailor or for the disabled soldier?

When does it end for the war-orphaned children wandering homeless across the face of Europe?

When will the war end for our armies of occupation, for our boys compelled to stay abroad—separated from their loved ones?

There are questions every American must face honestly. This war has taught us that we live in one world—that the peoples of other lands are our neighbors. We cannot close our eyes to their fate. For the sake of humanity, for the sake of lasting peace, we can no longer say that their desperate plight is not our concern.

There is a way American Federation of Labor members and the general public can fulfill their responsibility to victims of misfortune.

Next Monday the National War Fund and local Community Chests open drives to raise money for relief abroad and essential social agencies at home.

This is the final drive of the National War Fund. Its quota has been set at $115,000,000, a small amount compared to the billions upon billions expended for war. More than half of this $115,000,000 will be spent to operate the USO. The bulk of the remainder will be used to feed, clothe and house displaced persons abroad. Local community chests will use their quotas to provide badly needed health and welfare services in our own country.

Labor is ready to pitch in and help make community War Fund drives a success. During the war years, through its Labor League for Human Rights, the American Federation of Labor raised more than $120,000,000 for the American Red Cross, Community Chests and the National War Fund. We will measure up fully to our responsibilities in the drive ahead. AFL Labor League for Human Rights committees in more than 900 American cities and towns are cooperating with their local Community War Chests to that end.

We appeal to all Americans to be generous in victory. Although the shooting has stopped, the suffering caused by the war will afflict mankind for many long months to come. Anything you can contribute to the relief of the helpless and the hopeless will be welcomed by the National War Fund.

A New Floor For Wages

By BORIS SHISHKIN

A. F. of L. Economist

The American Federation of Labor is urging Congress to establish a minimum wage of 65 cents an hour. Is that unreasonable or extravagant? Let's see.

Suppose you are paid 65 cents an hour. Working 40 hours a week, you earn $26 a week. But there is a catch: $26 is what you earn, but that is not what you get.

Even if you have dependents, your withholding tax knocks the $26 down to $22.50. Social security and other small deductions bring it down to $22. Now, surely, this should be all yours to spend on yourself and your family. But wait! Haven't you forgotten something? How about that rainy day? Of course you would like a little something saved up. If you could only afford it, you would like very much to have ten percent taken out of your pay for that Victory savings bond. But you can't quite make it: you are a pretty low-paid worker anyhow and, besides, not much of a saver. The very best you can do is to try to save $100 a year. This means that another $2 a week comes out of the pay envelope before your pay gets home. And all you have left for yourself and your family to live on is just $20.

Now, if you are an hourly-paid worker, you know very well that you don't have much chance to work every week in a year. In most jobs there are seasonal layoffs. But suppose your luck holds and you get a break and you work 50 weeks in the year. That will mean that you and your family will have, at the most, $1,000 a year, or $83 a month, to live on. Count them over now, very carefully—$83 a month. For you and your wife and two kids.

And don't forget, you will have to pay 1945 prices. Your $83 a month today will buy only $69 worth of necessities of life at prewar prices. That makes your 65 cents an hour wage today exactly the same as 46 cents an hour in 1939.

To provide a bare minimum of subsistence living for a family of four today would take a wage of 87 cents an hour. The 65-cent minimum wage would give you only three-quarters of a minimum living.

Is the 65-cent minimum wage, then, too much to ask in a country with the greatest productive capacity in the world? Is the 65-cent minimum wage extravagant? Figure it for yourself. And while you still have that pencil handy to do your figuring, write a postcard to your Congressman, asking him to support the 65-cent minimum wage law.

SAY, LISTEN!

For the rest of this year, the AFL presents each Saturday evening at 6:45 P.M., EST, over the nation-wide network of the American Broadcasting Company a radio news-magazine, featuring the latest news at home and abroad and special reports by expert commentators on important labor problems. This program is listed in the radio columns of your newspaper as "Labor-U.S.A." Our own subtitle for the program is "The American Federationist of the Air." Don't miss these bright, newsy broadcasts! Listen every Saturday night!

Truman Charges Senate Let Him Down On "Must" Program For Human Needs

Unemployment Compensation Bill Shelved and Full Employment Bill Denatured

Washington, D. C.—President Truman dug sharp spurs into the hard, reactionary shell of Congress but forebore as yet to crack the whip over the lawmakers who appeared stubbornly intent on killing the whole legislative program for human needs during reconversion.

Following bitter labor protests over the shelving by the House Ways and Means Committee of unemployment compensation legislation, the President summoned Democratic members of the committee to the White House and gave them a dressing down.

He charged, first of all, that the Senate had "let him down" on this legislation by eliminating the key provision under which the federal government would supplement state funds in order to provide maximum compensation of $25 a week for 26 weeks to the unemployed.

The President then bluntly called upon the Democratic members of the House Ways and Means Committee to correct the shortcomings of the Senate bill.

However, the committee which had earlier postponed action indefinitely on the legislation, returned to the Capitol without making any promises. In fact, members of the committee told newsmen that so far as they were concerned the entire bill was dead.

Meanwhile, the Senate passed the Full Employment bill by an overwhelming vote but in such denatured form that liberal Senators questioned whether the legislation is worth the paper it is written on. Senate Majority Leader Barkley expressed this point of view when he said:

"This bill guarantees everybody out of work the right to seek a job and find one if he can. As I read it, the government will help, but only if it is convenient for the government to do so."

A plethora of amendments was adopted practically rewriting the basic philosophy of the bill and virtually forbidding any substantial federal spending to provide jobs for the unemployed.

E. F. Flore, AFL Vice President, Dies

Buffalo, N. Y.—Edward Frank Flore, 67, a vice president of the American Federation of Labor and general president of the Hotel and Restaurant Employes International Alliance and Bartenders International League, died at his home here Sept. 27.

One of America's well known labor leaders, Mr. Flore also was a member of the AFL's Executive Council.

He was born in Buffalo. At the age of 9 he was washing beer glasses in his father's saloon. In 1890 he joined Local 175 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employes union, and thereafter he devoted his life to the growth and development of organized labor.

His life was the subject of a book entitled "Growth of a Union, the Life and Times of Edward Flore," by Jay Rubin and M. J. Obermeier, two of Mr. Flore's associates.

At the age of 33, Mr. Flore was elected president of the Hotel and Restaurant Employes Union. At that time the union had 43,000 members. Today the group claims a membership of more than a quarter of a million, a growth credited to Mr. Flore's leadership and organizing ability.

Last year, at a dinner held here in his honor, Mr. Flore told of his trials after becoming international president at a weekly salary of $50, which made the expense of an office prohibitive. He described how he and his bride, the former Mary K. Schneider, established union headquarters in their home. He attributed his rise through the ranks to the assistance and interest of his wife. He served as a member of the Erie County Board of Supervisors for 12 years. He was a member of the Elks and the Eagles.

Surviving are his wife, Mary Schneider Flore, 4 brothers, Albert, Arthur, William and Eugene Flore and a sister, Bertha Flore.

Funeral services were held in Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Buffalo.

Mass Unemployment In 1946 Seen By Snyder In Report To Congress

Washington, D. C.—Substantial unemployment which may rise to eight million by next spring and stay at that level all during 1946 was forecast by Reconversion Director Snyder in a new report to Congress and the President.

The test of reconversion is jobs and the rapidity with which the nation's peacetime economy can absorb released war workers and returning veterans, Mr. Snyder emphasized.

He urged tax revision, including repeal of the excess profits tax on corporations, to stimulate business expansion and make funds available for higher wages, lower prices and increased dividends. He also asked repeal of the 3 percent normal tax on individual incomes, which would free millions of low-paid workers from paying income taxes. A similar tax program was recommended to Congress by Secretary of the Treasury Vinson.

Mr. Snyder called for upward revision of the Fair Labor Standards Act, declaring that the good effects of the present 40-cent minimum wage have been nullified by rising prices.

While stressing the prospect of increasing unemployment the report did not paint an entirely gloomy picture of the postwar American economy.

On the favorable side it pictured $140,000,000,000 of cash, bank deposits and government bonds in the hands of individuals, or three times the highest prewar figure.

It also listed the huge backlog of demand restrained by war, a great accumulated need for housing, automobiles, washing machines, refrigerators and all durable consumers' goods, and pointed out that business itself had funds for needed new plants and deferred outlays on maintenance.

The report said that much depended on how fast the potential demand could be translated into production, sales and jobs because our economy could not carry on out of accumulated savings alone. These savings, it stated, were largely in the hands of middle and higher income groups, and the steady employment needed by business and agriculture to attain full employment had to come from current salaries and wages.

It added that there was much reason for optimism but none for complacency and that optimism based on ignorance or failure to foresee the difficulties ahead might give way to unfounded panic.

LABOR REPRESENTATIVES IN VICTORY LOAN DRIVE

Washington, D. C.—Organized labor mobilized for the coming Victory Loan drive at a meeting called by James L. Houghteling, Director of National Organization, War Finance Division of the U. S. Treasury. State labor deputies of the country met with War Finance Division field representatives and national officials to plan union cooperation in the drive.

Ted R. Gamble, national director of the War Finance Division, and Robert W. Coyne, field director, addressed the conference stressing the need of the Victory Loan drive and the importance of labor's full cooperation. Plans were approved to throw the full weight of local unions and state labor bodies support behind the drive through assistance of union executives to state war finance committees. This assistance is particularly important to the success of the payroll savings program.

Union Label Exhibition Planned

Washington, D. C.—Secretary-Treasurer I. M. Ornburn of the Union Label Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor announced that next spring this department will hold its second AFL Union Label and Industrial Exhibition at St. Louis.

The exhibition will be similar to the first one held in Cincinnati in 1938. It was one of the most outstanding events in the history of organized labor and attracted nation-wide interest. There were 233 booths in which Union Label goods were exhibited and Union services demonstrated.

The St. Louis exhibition will be greater in scope and more extensive in the number of products shown. Dates for the exhibition will be fixed within the next 30 days by officials of the Union Label Trades Department in conjunction with the officials of the Central Trades and Labor Union of St. Louis and vicinity and the St. Louis Union Label Trades Section.

Green Invites VFW To Join With Labor For Objectives

Workers, Veterans, Want Peace and Plenty, Green Tells Convention

Chicago.—AFL President William Green invited the nation's veterans to join hands with labor and "carry on the good fight together" for economic progress and lasting peace.

Speaking before the 46th annual encampment of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, he emphasized that war veterans and workers "are in the same boat," that their interests are tied in closely together and that "their hopes for the future of America and the world point in the same direction." He added:

"Let me say here and now, with all the emphasis at my command that anyone who tries to divide labor and the veterans and to set them against each other is an enemy of American democracy."

Taking up foreign policy, Mr. Green said:

"First of all, the American Federation of Labor is thoroughly convinced that the war just ended must be the last war. Unless war is abolished, civilization will be. No country is any longer safe from attack. Science has shrunk the world. Time and space have been diminished. Atomic bombs and jet propulsion have made all previous forms of destruction look puny. The next Pearl Harbor will not only be the beginning of a war but the end of it as well. That's why we dare not risk any future Pearl Harbors. We must take the lead in the formation of a United Nations Organization much stronger than the one already formulated, which will effectively banish for all time the use of armed force in the settlement of any international disputes. That's where labor stands and we are confident that the veterans, who know the horrors of war, stand with us on this issue.

"Furthermore, the American Federation of Labor cannot see how lasting peace is possible except upon a firm basis of international justice. We think it is completely shameful that some of the nations which made such idealistic pledges during the war are now behaving like greedy spoilsmen. This is no time for petty bickering, for appeasement or for seeking temporary advantages. The failure of the council of foreign ministers in London to agree on equitable solutions of European problems fills us with dread of the future. We call upon our government to restore these negotiations to a higher plane, to reinspire our allies with the noble objectives for which we fought and to insist that America will not subscribe to any decision which is not based upon justice and equity. We trust that the veterans of this war will join us in that policy."

Turning to domestic issues, Mr. Green told the veterans:

"As we face the future in our own land, labor is resolved on building a bigger and better America. Science and invention have opened up new frontiers and new opportunities for our people that offer greater promise than the pioneers foresaw. We cannot be satisfied with going back to the so-called good old days. We remember that in those days a large proportion of our people lacked enough to eat, lived in slums or shacks and were unable to protect and preserve their childrens' health and provide proper care and adequate education. Too many people in our country still suffer from such conditions.

"To boast about high American standards of living at a time when these standards are denied to many millions of Americans is a pitiful mockery of intelligence.

"These achievements are possible in the immediate future if we but realize that man is the master and not the slave of the machine. We must put human rights not only upon a par but above and beyond property rights. We must establish an economy with a conscience.

"America has the resources, the know-how and the productive capacity to raise living standards far higher than any hitherto enjoyed."

Discussing the special problems of veterans, Mr. Green declared:

"Organized labor has supported and will continue to give its full backing to legislation designed to provide better employment, educational and business opportunities for the men mustered out of uniform.

"Our unions welcome ex-servicemen into membership and waive initiation fees for them. Those who were members of unions before entering the armed forces, will find that they have been kept in good standing during their absence without payment of dues and that their job seniority rights have been protected by union contracts.

"The American Federation of Labor agrees wholeheartedly with veterans organizations that the seniority of men who left jobs to join the armed forces accumulated during their service. With respect to veterans who never held a job before, the issue is in doubt, due to the complexities of industry and the seniority system itself and labor will welcome a decision by Congress clarifying the varied interpretations of the Selective Service Act's provisions on this subject. I want you to know that labor does not oppose and will not oppose a practical solution of this difficulty which will protect the rights of servicemen and keep the seniority system from being destroyed."

Watt Named Delegate to Conference in Paris

Washington, D. C.—Robert J. Watt, international representative of the American Federation of Labor, was named by President Truman as the American workers' delegate to the conference of the International Labor Organization which opens in Paris Oct. 15. Mr. Watt sailed for Europe immediately.

Among those named as advisors to Mr. Watt was Arnold S. Zander, president of the AFL's American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employes.

Delegates representing the government will be former Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins and Chairman Thomas of the Senate Military Affairs Committee. The employer delegate will be David Zellerbach, president of the Crown-Zellerbach Corp. of San Francisco.

Mr. Watt's reappointment to the post in which he has served for a good many years represents a significant victory for the American Federation of Labor since the CIO put up a stubborn but unsuccessful fight for the selection of one of its own representatives.

AFL Vigorously Demands Congress Enact 65-Cent Minimum Wage Floor

Washington, D. C.—Immediate increase of the minimum wage floor to 65 cents an hour is a vital step toward the attainment of full employment based upon full production, the AFL told a Senate Subcommittee on Education and Labor.

Testifying in behalf of AFL President William Green, Lewis G. Hines declared the higher rate will raise American living standards and enable the low-paid masses of American workers to buy more of the products of farm and factory.

Mr. Hines, legislative representative of the AFL, warned that even a minimum 65-cent hourly rate would provide a weekly wage of $26, which is only three-quarters of the family income held necessary by the Labor Department to maintain a bare subsistence budget. He added:

"What kind of a living then will the 65c rate provide? On such a wage, a worker's family of four can buy only three-fourths of the food necessary for a minimum adequate diet as calculated by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. This means that the father of the family, a man at active work, can have only a very small serving of meat, fish or poultry for one meal on 6 of the 7 days in the week. He cannot buy even his full meat ration under present quotas of ration tickets; he has at least one meatless day during the week. The family cannot buy enough green vegetables and citrus fruits to give them the necessary vitamins. They cannot buy enough protective foods to maintain bodily health.

"What of the house they may call a home? It may cost them only $20 a month in rent. And a house rented at so low a figure in these days will probably either be in need of repair or will provide only the most crowded quarters.

"What of clothes? The father of the family can afford one overcoat in 5 years. His street suit must last 3 years—and he has only 1. He can buy only 3 cotton shirts a year. For his wife, he can afford a heavy coat once in 4 or 5 years. And she must make out on 3 dresses a year, including house dresses, street dresses and all clothing for church or other occasions. With such meager clothing she cannot take her rightful place in the life of her community. The worker's growing boy must make out on 1 cotton suit per year, and 1 pair of slacks with 2 blouses. His wool suit must last 4 years. When this must supply his need for school and for play, for winter and for summer, can it be called a minimum of decency for a growing boy?

"This is all that a wage of 65 cents provides. Is it too much to ask in a country with the greatest productive capacity in the world? And if we fail to provide this 65c minimum, wages may be driven down so that hundreds of thousands of families will have much less than this to live on.

"American industry is able to produce at least a 65c living standard for every American, and a far higher standard for the vast majority of American workers. The thing we want to accomplish with this bill is to see that American workers actually receive the bare minimum.

Mr. Hines urged the Senate committee to eliminate all provisions in the pending bill, S. 1439, designed to establish by a wage order of the government specific rates of pay for job classifications above the 65-cent minimum. Such matters are best left to collective bargainng, the AFL representative said.

He also declared that wage differentials for subdivisions within an industry should be stricken out. As a further change in the bill, he suggested that learners, apprentices and messengers be not exempted from the minimum wage provisions.

Legion Commander Shuns Rally As Wall St. Post Honors DeMille

New York City.—Due to protests from AFL President William Green and many AFL unions, National Commander Edward N. Scheiberling, of the American Legion, stayed away from a ballyhooed rally on the steps of the Sub-Treasury Building during which the Legion's Wall Street Post presented an "Americanism" medal to Cecil B. DeMille.

DeMille, wealthy Hollywood and radio producer, is carrying on a one-man war against unions ever since the courts upheld the American Federation of Radio Actors in suspending him from membership because of his refusal to pay an assessment to fight a proposed anti-closed shop amendment to the state constitution of California. The assessment was $1.

In a telegram to Mr. Scheiberling, who was supposed to present the medal to DeMille, according to the advance publicity, Mr. Green warned that such action would imperil friendly relations between the AFL and the Legion in view of DeMille's hostile attitude.

Mr. Scheiberling replied that he had no control over the local Legion post's action in voting the medal to DeMille. His absence from the ceremony, however, indicated his disapproval.

The fact that it was the Wall Street Post of the Legion which bestowed recognition on DeMille speaks for itself, Mr. Green said.

Seabee Unit Wants To Come Home

By WILLIAM T. HOLLOMAN

Editor of Aero Mechanic

Okinawa.—The most unhappy men in the entire Pacific are appealing to the American labor movement for help.

The 71st Naval Construction Battalion—a unit of the famed Seabee organization—has a brilliant record of accomplishing miracles, many times under actual fire, but now it believes its mission is accomplished and its men needed at home to help in reconversion.

More than 70 percent of the men were volunteers, and of that number more than 60 percent would not, under ordinary circumstances, have been drafted—either because of their age or because of essential occupations. They formed the Seabee group because there was an important war job to be done, but now the war is over.

James H. Quackenbush, of Columbia, S. C., expressed the general opinion of his buddies when he declared:

"The huge majority of us fellows are former union men, and we quit our jobs and became Seabees when the labor movement was asked to help form a skilled construction battalion. We were glad to be part of the team that won the war, but now the only future we can see is for us to be stuck out on these islands indefinitely improving bases. The same work can—and should—be done by private capital with civilian employes. We hope the unions back home take the same attitude and help us return."